

Disclosure

of things evolutionists don't want you to know

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DINO FEATHERS!

"If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, quacks like a duck, and has feathers like a duck, then it probably is a DINOSAUR."

The title of this essay was inspired by the classic 1932 Marx Brothers comedy, *Horse Feathers*. Sadly, most readers are too young to make the connection with the goofy professors of Huxley and Darwin colleges portrayed in that film. But what was written at the end of last year about dino feathers in the scientific literature is funnier than what was written in *Horse Feathers*, so this will be an entertaining column, anyway.

In our August newsletter, we reported that scientists now admit that *Archaeopteryx* was not a missing link between dinosaurs and birds,¹ so we don't need to cover that ground again.

In September, there were several articles about dinosaur feathers found in amber. Roughly 4,000 amber samples from a particular location in Canada had been collected over the years and stored in various museums. Some dedicated scientists examined all of them, looking for feathers, and found 11 samples that contained feathers. They analyzed them, and reported their findings in the professional literature.

The amber samples are between 70 and 85 million years old, and come from a site called Grassy Lake in western Canada that was once home to a conifer forest. The site is well known for the wide range of insects found preserved in its amber. ...

Because the amber-encased feathers are not associated with body fossils, the researchers cannot be sure whether they come from birds or from non-avian dinosaurs. Both were present in prehistoric Canada 70-85 million years ago. But the authors do make some guesses.²

They don't know what creatures these feathers came from, so they are guessing. They guess the feathers came from dinosaurs because they presume the amber samples are tens of millions of years old. The entire analysis is based on false evolutionary assumptions. Specifically,

Feathers' evolutionary origin remains murky, but palaeontologists propose that they started off as simple, flexible filaments similar to those in the coat of 'dino fuzz' that covered the small predatory dinosaur *Sinosauropteryx*. From there, feathers adapted to become complex branching structures, eventually culminating in the asymmetrical flight feathers of the early bird *Archaeopteryx* and its living relatives.³

The starting assumption is that feathers must have evolved from something. Everything after that is speculation about how they must have evolved from something.

Here's how the authors justify their assumption that the feathers did come from dinosaurs.

Although neither avian nor dinosaurian skeletal material has been found in direct association with amber at the Grassy Lake locality, fossils of both groups are present in adjacent stratigraphic units. Hadrosaur footprints are found in close association with the amber, and younger (late Campanian and Maastrichtian) strata of western Canada contain diverse nonavian dinosaur and avian remains. There is currently no way to refer the feathers in

¹ *Disclosure*, August 2011, "Archaeopteryx Abandoned!"

² Switek, *Nature*, 15 September 2011, "Amber

inclusions showcase prehistoric feathers-Fossils could help to reveal how dino feathers first evolved", <http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110915/full/news.2011.539.html>

³ *ibid.*

amber with certainty to either birds or the rare small theropods from the area. However, the discovery of end-members of the evolutionary-developmental spectrum in this time interval, and the overlap with structures found only in nonavian dinosaur compression fossils, strongly suggests that the protofeathers described here are from dinosaurs and not birds.⁴

They haven't found ANY skeletons of birds or dinosaurs where the amber was found; but they found some in adjacent stratigraphic units. "Adjacent" in this context generally means, "immediately above" or "immediately below." So they found skeletons in the rock layers just above or below the layer containing the amber. But since evolutionists believe that layers represent millions of years of time, that means the feathers are separated from the fossils by millions of years.

EVOLUTIONARY-DEVELOPMENTAL SPECTRUM

The analysis is also based on the "evolutionary-developmental spectrum." In plain English, an evolutionist has proposed that feathers evolved through five stages, numbered with Roman numerals.

Canadian amber provides examples of stages I through V of Prum's evolutionary-developmental model for feathers.⁵

Since feathers from all five stages of supposed evolution were discovered in amber that is from the same time period, there is no evidence of sequential evolution. But their conclusion is that because they found Stage I feathers, they must have come from dinosaurs.

HAIR MUST BE FEATHERS

Then, in October, the journal *Nature* said this:

The almost perfectly complete fossil of a young theropod dinosaur – including some preserved hair and skin* (see update below) – was unveiled yesterday by scientists from the Bavarian paleontological and geological collections (BSPG) in Munich, Germany. BSPG conservator Oliver Rauhut described it as the best preserved dinosaur skeleton to have ever been found in Europe.

*UPDATE: As many of you noted in the comments, dinosaurs are not known to have had

hair. The word was widely used by German-language media, but it is likely that the dinosaur did not have hair, but protofeathers, fuzzy, filament-like precursor to feathers, seen in other theropods.⁶

They found evidence of hair, but since dinosaurs are known to have had feathers, they must really have found feathers that looked like hair. Believing is seeing! ☺

OBJECTIVITY

Evolutionary bias is so strong that scientists are unable to view the data objectively.

Although they offer limited insight concerning the identity or behavior of their bearer, their structure and pigmentation bear directly on feather evolutionary stages.⁷

They don't know what kind of creatures these feathers came from, but it still tells them something about evolution! Where are the science police? ☺

Evolution in the News

LIFE ON MARS

NASA has sent another probe to Mars; but are they looking for life?

Evolutionists really want to find evidence of life on Mars because they believe it will prove life evolved on Earth. Their reasoning is flawed. It goes like this:

Life, they believe, is the result of an unguided, random process. The right conditions just happened to occur, and life resulted. Given enough time (that is, given sufficient opportunity) the conditions that permit life to begin will, sooner or later, happen by accident. Therefore, anyplace where the conditions make it possible for life to exist, life will originate spontaneously (sooner or later).

Given the large surface area of Mars, with a variety of ecological zones, water, and the presumed billions of years that they believe Mars has existed, they think that life certainly must have existed at some point in time, and might still exist today. So they think any evidence of life, living or extinct, is proof of evolution.

The obvious flaw in their reasoning is that the

⁴ McKellar, *et al.*, *Science*, 16 September 2011, "A Diverse Assemblage of Late Cretaceous Dinosaur and Bird Feathers from Canadian Amber", pages 1619-1622, <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/333/6049/1619.full?sid=535f2aa2-707f-4e22-8488-3cb87b998f46>

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *Nature* News Blog, 13 Oct 2011, "Stunningly intact dinosaur fossil found in Germany", http://blogs.nature.com/news/2011/10/stunningly_intact_dinosaur_fos.html

⁷ *ibid.*

existence of life does not prove evolution. Life exists on Earth. It may be the result of creation or evolution. If life exists on Mars, it may be the result of creation or evolution.

The absence of life on Mars does not disprove evolution. Perhaps there is no place on Mars where the conditions have ever permitted life to exist. Perhaps the intelligent designer who created life on Earth chose not to create life on Mars. There is no way to know for sure why there isn't any life there. But, if there is not now, and never has been, any life on Mars, it means unequivocally that life never evolved on Mars. That's not good for evolutionists.

WHY GO TO MARS?

Since finding or not finding life on Mars doesn't prove or disprove evolution, then why go? We have to go to Mars because we don't know what we might find there. (If we knew what we would find there, there would be no point in going.) Furthermore, we might discover something valuable, such as an unknown mineral with amazing properties. If so, we could mine it and send it back to Earth, or determine its chemical structure and synthesize it on Earth. There's no telling what we will discover until we have thoroughly investigated what's there.

Unfortunately, any public space venture has to be paid for by the general population. Reasons like, "We might find something good," or "We will learn something we don't already know," or "because it's there," usually aren't sufficient to open the pocketbooks of most Americans. But, "We are going to Mars to find evidence that life has evolved there, proving that there is no God, freeing you from the burden of religion," is an attractive incentive to some people. Of course, the last two clauses are never stated explicitly, but atheists don't need to have it spelled out for them.

LOOKING OR NOT?

NASA is walking a fine line, making it difficult to determine if the primary goal of the current mission is to find signs of past life or not. The day the latest Mars rover, named Curiosity, was launched (28 November, 2011), *New Scientist* published this:

Curiosity is five times bigger than its predecessors, Spirit and Opportunity. Due to arrive on the red planet on 6 August 2012, this behemoth is equipped with state-of-the-art tools that will allow it to search for signs of life, and to probe the habitability of its landing site, Gale crater. This site finally was chosen earlier this year after a vigorous debate regarding various rival options: sediment on Gale crater contains clays, a sure sign that it was exposed to liquid

water at some point.⁸

Liquid water is one of the conditions believed to be necessary for life. That's why they are most interested in exploring a place that appeared to have had water at some point.

But an earlier article in *New Scientist* said that NASA was NOT looking for life.

Why isn't NASA hunting for life?

Even the most ardent fans of the Red Planet must occasionally wish for more than just hints of water popping up in ever-new places. So why not send a robot to hunt directly for little green men?

One word: Viking. NASA's Viking landers did just that in 1976, laying out a tasty solution of nutrients to attract any microbes that might be living in a soil sample, like cookies left on a plate for Santa. The nutrients were laced with radioactive carbon, so if the solution was digested, a radiation monitor above the sample would detect the resulting gas. ... "They were hoping to find signs of life but the results came back basically negative - there is no life as we know it," says Ralph Milliken at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. ...

The \$2.5 billion Curiosity rover will hunt for organic molecules and isotopic hints of life, but NASA is still shying away from the L word. "NASA cannot say to taxpayers that they put \$2.5 to \$3 billion to search for life, and then say, 'We have found no life - thank you, bye bye'," says Michel Cabane, leader of one of Curiosity's organics-sniffing instruments, who is based at the Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris, France.

"If you project the message that you are hunting for life, even though it is very important to many of us, and you return with a null or ambiguous answer, people would be disappointed," says Jack Mustard of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, who is a former chair of NASA's advisory panel on Mars.⁹

It appears to us that they know perfectly well that they aren't going to find any signs of life on Mars, but they don't want to admit it because they can't get funding for the project if they admit that it is doomed to fail.

⁸ *New Scientist*, 28 November 2011, "Curiosity rover proclaims good health on way to Mars", <http://www.newscientist.com/blogs/shortsharpscience/2011/11/the-most-ambitious-and-expensi.html>

⁹ McKee, *New Scientist*, 12 November 2011, "The rover's return", <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21228381.900-megarover-ready-to-hunt-for-life-signs-on-mars.html?full=true>

GOOD REASONS

Even though they aren't going to find signs of past life on Mars, there are good reasons to go. Past missions have discovered rock formations that appear to be sedimentary (that is, formed by water) that were subsequently sculpted by wind or water erosion. But Mars has no liquid water, and hardly any atmosphere. This raises unanswered questions. Where did the water go? Is there another process that produces rock formations that look like they were produced by the action of water, but doesn't involve water?

I'm curious about those things, and I hope that Curiosity finds the answers to those questions, and many other questions that have nothing to do with the theory of evolution.

There is limited space on space probes. Scientists generally can't send all the equipment necessary to perform all the experiments that they want to do. So, the experiments are prioritized, and the ones deemed least important don't make the trip. **Futile experiments, attempting to prove the ridiculous theory of evolution, bump more important experiments from the flight.** It is just another example of how **belief in evolution is harmful to the advancement of science.**

Email

COMPARATIVE ANATOMY VINDICATED

An evolutionist, critical of our Comparative Anatomy essay, actually proved our point.

We received this email from John.

Hello Jones!

Looks like one of your [expletive deleted] disciples has been getting into online arguments, with scienceagainstevolution as his only source! Thought you might be interested in some of the criticism YOU receive from user "WorkingMouse." This thread seems to continue forever!

http://www.reddit.com/r/atheism/comments/mwgyv/we_win/c34go2a

Sincerely,
John

Yes, it is a long, pointless, thread. As we have repeatedly said before, it is a waste of time to get involved in these threads, unless you really enjoy pointless arguments.

But **this is one of those rare times when following a thread can be interesting and informative.**

A creationist with a vulgar screen name quoted one of our essays to try to make his point. In that essay we quoted a popular college textbook's section on Comparative Anatomy and said,

Notice that **if things are similar, it is evidence of evolution.** It shows they have a common origin. But, **if things are different, it is evidence of evolution.** It shows that they have changed over time. Since similarity is evidence of evolution, and difference is evidence of evolution, **everything is evidence of evolution!**¹⁰

The other correspondent in this thread, who calls himself (or herself), WorkingMouse, defended the evolutionary position by writing,

This is at once an oversimplification as well as **ironically truer** than he would expect. **The theory of evolution is the culmination of all the biological evidence we have; by definition, everything we've seen in biology so far has contributed to it.** The power of a scientific theory is measured by its **predictive and explanatory ability** - and as evolution covers the full scope of biology, it is quite powerful. Not only that, but it remains predictive, for example, of ring species. Divergence and convergence both are expected in the evolutionary model, though under different circumstances. This is exactly what we see in nature. Despite, there remain quite a few ways to disprove the theory - but lo and behold, we've found nothing that would do so.

The evolutionist actually agrees with us! **He admits that both similarity and difference are cited as proof of evolution, which was precisely our point.**

However, he plays the **Intellectual Superiority card.** He has the intellectual ability to see how this could be, even though **simpletons like us don't understand.**

Then he plays the **Boldface Bluff card.** He says, "there remain quite a few ways to disprove the theory," but he **doesn't say what they are.**

Then he plays the **Post-prediction Card.** They haven't found anything that disproves the theory because every difference and every similarity is **"predicted" by the theory (after the fact).**

It is the "explanatory ability" of the evolutionists to explain away every obvious error in the theory, not the power of the theory itself, which keeps it alive.

Our 2004 essay said,

If you ask an evolutionist why we don't see evidence of evolution today, he will probably say that creatures no longer evolve because they

¹⁰ Disclosure, March 2004, Comparative Anatomy, <http://www.scienceagainstevolution.org/v8i6f.htm>

are just about ideally suited to the environment. There isn't any more evolution because there isn't any more room for improvement. But then, in point 4 above, the argument is that creatures are so badly designed that they could not be the product of any competent designer. (This is the classic "Panda's Thumb" argument.) They can't have it both ways. Creatures are either well-suited to the environment or they are not.¹¹

WorkingMouse responded,

Actually, we can. Many species have reached a point where they are well-adapted to their environment. That does not mean that they are maximally adapted. The prime example of this is the recurrent laryngeal nerve. The nerve originally followed a simple path, as it does in fish; in further diverged animals (notably mammals), it takes an overly long path down into the chest and back up into the neck. This is because it still works, and it is genetically easier to keep the flawed component than to correct the distended path. It's a good example of a trait that remains because it is evolutionarily neutral (or neutral enough), but no engineer, no designer would logically include.

Also, they make a massive mischaracterization - evolution continues to occur; this is at the same time rather evident. It occurs slowly, however we still witness it. When an environment changes, different traits become favored, different alleles move to fixation, and different mutations become able to provide increased fitness. Be it with peppered moths, E. coli that can uptake and digest citrate in oxidative environments, crabs with shells resemble samurai masks, or sweet, yellow, seedless bananas, it still occurs, and can be made to occur.

Again, he agrees with us. We said they want to "have it both ways," and his response was, "Actually, we can."

His "proof" is mere speculation and opinion about the recurrent laryngeal nerve. He does not know what path the nerve originally followed. He assumes mammals evolved from fish, so the nerve must have changed its path. A more reasonable conclusion is that since the nerve follows a different path in mammals and fish, mammals must not have evolved from fish.

The different nerve path is cited as proof of evolution. We have no doubt that if the nerve had followed the same path, then it would have been "proof" that mammals evolved from fish. As we said in 2004, every similarity, and every difference, can be viewed as proof of evolution if you have the explanatory power to spin it skillfully.

He also uses the, "God would not have done it that way" argument. As he admits, the nerve works perfectly well, so it isn't really "flawed." But, somehow he knows that God could have done it better if He really existed. A creationist, however,

might disagree and say that God created the nerve path perfectly to begin with, but the flawed path is evidence of degradation due to sin.

3 (+ 1) EXPLANATIONS

If the nerve originally did have a simple, straight path, and later changed to a less optimal path, there are three possible explanations for why it changed.

The evolutionists' explanation is, "It just happened, and it wasn't bad enough for natural selection to prevent it."

The creationists' explanation is, "It is a result of the curse for sin."

An Intelligent Design proponent might say, "It is just the second law of thermodynamics in action." Some intelligent force (not the God of Abraham) originally created a straight nerve path, but a random mutation (not related to sin) caused it to change for the worse. Every time information is copied, there is an opportunity that information can be lost. Genetic information necessary for the simple nerve path was lost because of a copying mistake during reproduction. Natural selection wasn't strong enough to prevent the harmful mutation from becoming established in the population. (This really isn't much different from the evolutionists' explanation. The subtle difference is that evolutionists would say it is bad luck; ID proponents say it is natural law that things degrade over time.)

Another explanation is that the path didn't change at all, leading to a fourth explanation. The path might actually be optimal, but scientists don't realize it.

There is no scientific way to determine which explanation is correct. Was it bad luck, bad karma, natural tendency to degrade, or the best solution? You make the call.

WorkingMouse also claimed that the slow microevolution which really does occur today is evidence that macroevolution occurred in the past, confirming our statements about what evolutionists claim.

The thread goes on and on. We've given you the link to it so you can read it all for yourself, if you are a glutton for punishment. But let us save you trouble with this summary. In general, every time we said that evolutionists try to spin something using a particular argument, the evolutionist proved us right by trying to spin it exactly the way we said he would.

¹¹ *ibid.*

POLITICS – AND EVOLUTION – ARE OH SO PERSONAL

http://articles.philly.com/2011-08-29/news/29941555_1_creation-and-evolution-religion-science

“Religious and political gripes with evolution are intensifying”

This month’s web site review looks at an article found in the article collections of **Philly.com** which features award-winning news, sports and commentary from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Philadelphia Daily News* newspapers.



Since we are approaching another presidential election year here in the United States, the views of presidential candidates regarding creation and evolution are again making headlines. Republican runners are viewed as being hostile to evolution. Only Jon Huntsman is viewed as being “science-positive.”

What makes this article interesting reading is that it shows how people who believe in evolution try to portray those whose views may differ. This article asks “why should this debate (about creation and evolution) rage in the political sphere when there’s near universal acceptance among

scientists that Darwin had the basic idea right 150 years ago?”

The article continues to talk about the issue of teaching evolution in public schools and whether the religious picture should be taught as well. You will have to judge for yourself if you believe a proper presentation is made on how creationism should be taught in public schools.

As the 2012 presidential election approaches, you will find many more articles in the mainstream press that try to portray evolution as the only reasonable world view of origins. Just be aware that often you are only given part of the picture. Very few articles will present a fair view of both sides regarding questions about creation and evolution.



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Disclosure, the Science Against Evolution newsletter, is edited by R. David Pogge.

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